In the depth of this Oriental Stage stands a prodigious cultural repertoire whose individual items evoke a fabulously rich world: the Sphinx, Cleopatra, Eden, Troy, Sodom and Gomorrah, Astarte, Isis and Osiris, Sheba, Babylon, the Ginni, the Magi, Nineveh, Prester John, Mahomet, and dozens more; settings, in some cases names only, half-imagined, half-known; monsters, devils, heroes; terrors, pleasures, desires (1).

In his introduction to James Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, C. W. Stewart writes It seems more natural to speak of "the author of Hajji Baba" than of "James Justinian Morier", for the book is familiar, at least by name, to many people who are ignorant of the personality of its writer. His contemporaries, however, regarded him in different light, and a reviewer could describe him, without being suspected of exaggeration, as "among the most skilful diplomatists, the most instructive of our travelers, and the most amusing of our novelists". This summary of Morier's talents, since it enumerates successive phases of his career, and lays stress on the attributes that combined for the triumph of Hajji Baba, provides the outline for a sketch of his achievements (2).

James Justinian Morier (1780-1849) was the son of Justinian Morier, the Consul-General of the Levant Company at Constantinople (3). Several members of Morier's family had connections -- in one way or another -- with the East. James Morier, a son of a diplomat, entered the world of diplomacy in 1807; he spent part of his diplomatic career in Persia. During that time he wrote three long literary works. They are: First is The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan (1824)(4), Afterwards, Hajji Baba. Then he published The Adventures of Hajji Baba in England (1828) and Zohrab the Hostage (1832). C. W. Stewart mentions that "Zohrab the Hostage, a Persian tale, but even this book, though popular in its day, has failed to survive"(5). At the same time, it remains that The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan is the work by which James Morier is still remembered (6).

In this paper, I attempt to read Hajji Baba in terms of two major broad lines. First is the political and diplomatic background of Morier's family in London and Constantinople and second is his mature experience as a diplomat and the political conditions during his stay in Tehran. Thus my approach comes from cultural and political perspectives.

Morier's social and political background is marked by his fascination with the culture of the East (7) -- a fascination that included his travel experience and his reading of English literature. The Oriental Stage is marked by Antoine Galland's French translation of the One Thousand and One Nights under the Western made title, The Arabian Nights (1704) and perhaps other Arabic and Persian poetry and literature (8). A great number of translations from Arabic and Persian were introduced into the English literature (9). Also there were important books of travel literature that could have influenced James Morier's mentality and literary production. Those translations encouraged other writings (10), and generated other literature related to the East and its cultural heritage (11). Needless to say that the Romantics produced a huge bulk of literature related to the East, and the Orient is considered as "a major component of European Romanticism"(12). Though it is a literary work with little reputation those days, Morier's Hajji Baba represents a mentality of some Romantic writers and politicians.

It was warmly welcomed by writers and scholars in the nineteenth-century England. Curzon describes this piece of literature in the following words "Morier's Hajji Baba represents an account of the 'unchanging characteristics of a singularly unchanging people'" (13). And C. W. Stewart writes When Hajji Baba appeared in 1824, good judges of fiction, among them Sir Walter Scott, immediately recognized it as a fine piece of picaresque literature, worthy to be compared with Gil Blas, the masterpiece that had suggested to Morier the mould into which to pour his knowledge of the East (14). In the middle of this flux of writing, Morier was drawn to what looked to him like a unique life of the East. His view of the East helped him go with the fashion of his time as it was the time of the West's keen interest in the "exotic life" of the East. Exoticism, in this context, is meant to express the uniqueness of life due to its non-Western flavor and cultural milieu. Therefore, it is no wonder that Morier's Hajji Baba has been described as "the perennially delightful novel of Persian life" (15). In this context, I would like to quote Edward Said as he says: Whenever the Oriental motif for the English writer was not principally a stylistic matter (as in Fitzgerald's Rubáiyát or in Morier's Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan), it forced him to confront a set of imposing resistances to the individual fantasy (16).

Edward Said's comment on the English writers came to be true in the case of Morier. In Hajji Baba, Morier shows a double vision. The question of his interest in the East does not stop at the border of fascination and entertainment. His fascination with the culture of the East is more than a love of something that is meant to be naturally beautiful and socially entertaining and enjoyable: it is an admiration of the atmosphere and life of the glamorous East in general; he sees the East as a land of bounteous gifts of Nature -- serene waters, unclouded sky, and gifted poets. Its a land of luxuriant
following a well established tradition in Western literature, the people of the East are described as a dominant characteristic of the Western writing about the East. As la mode of the Romantics and dominant in the European school, and clichés that have been copied almost everywhere in the run, such a literary-political bond and its consequences have created stereotypes that have become Western literature is the image mirror upon which European political affairs reflects. Thus, on the long events in Europe, kept the rival ambassadors busily employed (25).

Meanwhile, people of the East -- in Morier's eyes -- are infidels, corrupt, inquisitive, loquacious, treacherous and sometimes naives and idiots. Hajji Baba reflects the double vision of the Others or the Colonized. Such a vision is a Romantic one; it looks identical to Thomas Moore's vision to the Nature of the East on the one hand and its people on the other in his poem Lalla Rookh (1818). Moreover, Morier sees that woman in Islam occupies a marginal position, or even worse, as she exists only to gratify man's physical needs. One of the unpleasant and offensive descriptions, by the Romantics, of the East and its culture came from Robert Southey in the preface to his translation of some Arabic and Persian poetry. He described the Persian poetry, in particular, as "high seasoned garbage of barbarians" (18).

Morier's learning and knowledge of the East goes back to the neo-Classical scholars who degraded, under-valued, and derogated the East and its cultural heritage. Most of those eighteenth century scholars were Biblical scholars who loathed or antagonized the East. Of the neo-Classical outlook and antagonism to the East, certain hints are really indicative: John Lettice, William Beckford's tutor, had forced him at the age of thirteen to burn a 'splendid heap of oriental drawings, etc.' (19). Gibbon's tutors at Magdalin College frustrated him and dissuaded him from learning Arabic; Shaftesbury's dogmatism prevented him from reading the Arabian Nights for the naive reason that it was originated in the country of the infidels; (20) Alexander Pope wrote to Lady Mary Wortly Montagu that the East is the land of Jealousy, where the unhappy women converse with eunuchs (21). Richard Burton made a pilgrimage to Mecca in disguise and wrote about it (22). In his introductory epistle to Morier's Hajji Baba, Peregrine Persic mentions Dr. Fundgruben, Chaplain to the Swedish Embassy at the Ottoman Porte, objection to Monsieur de Bonneval who converted from Christianity to Islam and rose to high rank in the Turkish government, and also mentioned in initials Messrs. C---- and B-----, in more modern times. (The former a Topchi Bashi, or general of artillery, the latter an attendant upon the Captain Pasha) (23).

In a fifth place, Samuel Johnson portrays the young women of Cairo as ignorant; these women's days and nights are alike, and in the Arab seraglio, exquisitely beautiful women run from room to room as a bird hops from wire to wire in his cage (24).

Morier stands in between the eighteenth century neo-Classicists and the nineteenth century Romantic Orientalists learning from them. The early images of the East are neo-Classical, then he develops a Romantic theory based on, perhaps, Byron, Scott, and Moore. Morier's literary production is a qualitative and a quantitative, that enriches the political thought of the upcoming generations of scholars and writers, and deepens the stereotypes of the East in the Western scholarship and academy.

Though Morier is a minor Romantic writer, his literary production represents the mutual relationship between Orientalism as a stream of European thought, and literary Romanticism as an intellectual stream common in the early decades of the nineteenth century Europe. Such a relationship has been created, enhanced, then confirmed by the extraneous efforts of the social philosophers, political thinkers, and literary scholars of the time. The work of such writers and politicians covered with full awareness, such provinces of knowledge as philosophy, history, economics, politics, philology, literature, sociology, and Egyptology. In the end, the outcome is a kind of imperialist oppression against the East.

Morier's career as a diplomat has flourished and been completed by his literary writing; these two factors of diplomacy and writing integrated in one activity aiming at one end -- Colonialism. In connection with the subject of Colonialism C.W. Stewart writes:

At the beginning of the nineteenth-century, Persia aroused much interest among European powers; in France Napoleon dreamed of invading India with the Shah's assistance, Russia was aggressive on the northern Persian frontier west of the Caspian, and after the alliance with France, joined actively the plan of attacking India; while Britain hoped, by a treaty with Persia to restrain Afghanistan from disturbing north India and to frustrate the Franco-Russian schemes. Both Britain and France sent representatives to compete for the Shah's favor, and the vacillations of Persian foreign policy, in correspondence with events in Europe, kept the rival ambassadors busily employed (25).

Western literature is the image mirror upon which European political affairs reflects. Thus, on the long run, such a literary-political bond and its consequences have created stereotypes that have become dominant in the European scholarship, and clichés that have been copied almost everywhere in the West whenever the subject is related to the Eastern culture and people: its generalization has become a dominant characteristic of the Western writing about the East. As la mode of the Romantics and
Virtually no European who wrote on or traveled to the Orient in the period after 1800 exempted himself from participating in the Orientalist discourse. This discourse was characterized by the use of Oriental clichés to depict the Eastern world in a particular way. These clicheés served as key-words to another list of clichés. In the end, the outcome of these packs of clichés reveals that historical prejudices that have been accumulating for centuries. This generalization about the Easterners whether Arabs, Persians, or Turks, is very clear in Hajji Baba. Morier's contribution to the Western Colonialist thought stretch back to the eighteenth century and forward to the Victorian era and after; accumulation of evidence in Hajji Baba reveals Morier's undeclared political intentions, and the message is that the East is characterized by good fortune, and it prospers with luxurious life, but it is morally weak. Morier has learnt much from the Western scholarship. About such a scholarship, Edward Said writes:

The choice of 'Oriental' was canonical; it had been employed by Chaucer and Mandeville, by Shakespeare, Dryden, Pope, and Byron. It designated Asia or the East, geographically, morally, culturally (26). Morier's Hajji Baba presents stories built upon political theory enhanced by travel experience, and made in imitation of the style of Galland's version of the Arabian Nights (1707-14)(27) and also he attempts to write a connected narrative "upon the plan of that excellent picture of European life, [The Adventures of] Gil Blas [of Santilline] of Le Sage" (my italics)(28) On the source of Hajji Baba of Isphahan, C. W. Stewart writes Hajji Baba and its sequel completed the history of the rascally son of the Isphahan barber, so far as Morier was concerned, but a further piece of information concerning Hajji is supplied by Sir P. M. Skyes, who, in The Glory of the Shia World, a record of Persian pilgrim-age, presents as the narrator Nusrullah Khan, the grand-son of Hajji Abul Hasan Khan, the original of Hajji Baba (29).


Morier's misrepresentation of the culture of the East supports a purely political theory in service of a militarily staunch and economically solid European society. It is obvious that exaggeration of what Morier introd-uces to the Western reader is an example of Romantic Orientalism. Some of these images of the East are meant to be presented with contempt and derogation. For example, a Jew was hanged and highly humiliated by the Muslim authority, and a Greek was insulted and oppressed, as his execution had taken place purposely before the door of a wealthy Greek, and the body was ordered to remain there [for] three days before it was permitted to be carried away for interment. The expectation that the Greek would be induced to pay down a handsome sum, in order that this nuisance might be removed from his door, and save him from the ill luck which such an object is generally supposed to bring, made the officer entrusted with the execution prefer this spot to every other (271).

This paragraph is a reference to the war between Greece as a representative of Europe, and Turkey as a repre-sentative of the East. Such a war had extremely annoyed and exacerbated the central powers of Europe; these powers -- with various interests -- formed what was known as the Holly Alliance in which Russia, for her own ends, and from traditional sympa-thy, was the champion of the Eastern Christians. France, partly from religious and cultural inclination, inclined the same way ... (31).

The war between Turkey and Greece also infuriated the English Romantic writers, thus their stand as regards this war lucidly appeared in their literary production, especially in the poetry of Byron. In Hajji Baba the images of the cruel death of the jew and the inhuman punishment which he received after his death, portrayed by Morier, are ugly enough to make flesh creep. It is clear that this portrayal presents ideas identical to those of the French Romantic author and statesman Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) as he, in his Oeuvres, writes about the Easterners that they "Of liberty, they know nothing; of propriety, they have none: force is their God"(32). Such an image assures the Western reader not to take the East seriously, and to consider its culture as something ridiculous to scoff at; the West remains to view the East with contempt in a framework of a Western made Eastern stereotypes. These fabricated and imaginative clichés and anecdotes about the East are common, varied, and wide-spread in Europe. Morier is one of the literary disciples of William Beckford as he learns from Beckford as well as from the other Romanticism like Byron, Scott, and Moore, how to "see" the East.

Like Beckford and Byron, Morier enjoyed travell-ing and reading travel literature especially when the subject matter and material were related to the East. Morier derogates the cultural heritage of the East by using many tools available to him. For instance, women in the East are made to look like slaves kept in the Sultan's seraglio or in the harem for the purpose of cooking food, preparing meals, and cleaning (382), and to offer endless sexual pleasures for the Sultan or Emir; though the Eastern woman is obliged to devote herself to these purposes, she is still inhumanely treated; she is next to nothing at home; she is a worthless object. "Women by you Mussulmans, I know [,] are treated as mere accessories to pleasure"(215). Morier, in this context, displays racial ideas came out of some school of thought as did Beckford (1760-1844), and Chateaubriand (1768-1848) where the image of the East was cohesively adhered to the freedom of licentious sex. On such derogatory ideas, Edward Said writes.
created a political novel in which his imitation of Byron resulted in a new renewed image of Muslims European scholarship. In addition to reconstructing these images, Hajji Baba duplicates ideas and Baba do not come out of vacuum; Morier simply reconstructs From this variety of examples, it sounds clear that the negative images of the East in Morier's Hajji she said "solely my complexion" (42).

Alhadra is "crazy moorish maid", "a Moorish sorcerer", "an ungrateful woman" (41), whose crime was, Coleridge depicts Arabs as "Moors", Moresc[s], "rebels", "vile[s]", and "fiends", and the Arab woman Also, throughout Osorio, "Alhadra is associated with political conspiracy and violence" (39). Moreover, Coleridge depicts Arabs as "Moors", Moresc[s], "rebels", "vile[s]", and "fiends", and the Arab woman Alhadra is "crazy moorish maid", "a Moorish sorcerer", "an ungrateful woman" (41), whose crime was, she said "solely my complexion" (42).

From these repelling anecdotes, one realizes how references to the East are imbued with deep fascination as they systematically keep portraying it in ugly images full of cruelty, ruthlessness, violence, and lasciviousness. In relation to such a context, Kabbani writes The violence of the East was often linked in Galland's entries with sexuality. This was a common trope of European travel writing: the all invasive seraglio with its crimes of passion was never far from the traveler's mind (36).

In another reference to the downtrodden Eastern woman in Hajji Baba Dr. Ahmak makes "a present of his Kurdish slave to his Majesty" (175) so as to remain in favor of his majesty the king. In short, the Eastern woman is made to be seen, by all means, as a dirt cheap "commodity". Moreover, one sees Hajji Baba himself in a mission where he receives orders to Buy women slaves for the Shah, to see them instructed in dancing, music, and embroidery, and to purchase spangled stiks [sic] and other luxuries for the royal harem (419). These negative images of Muslim man and woman are wide-spread and common in the Romantic literature. For example, Byron's Eastern woman is locked up in the seraglio and kept in the harem to be used for giving the wealthy Arab man all means of sexual satisfaction and at the same time, she covets white men for the sake of better sex; she is there to gratify the sexual desire of the rulers (representatives of the Muslim Caliphate) who are driven by lust, and the merchants and tradesmen (a social class close to the Muslim Caliph), whereas the rest of the people are oppressed in slavery and poverty; they, along with whatever tradesmen can bring in for achieving a financial profit. This image reflects the irony that while the Arab woman is enslaved by Arab and Muslim man, she tries to enslave Don Juan. The two images together suggest the humiliation of woman in the East (37). Elsewhere, in Eastern Tales Byron portrays the Arab woman negatively as she lives in violent circumstances and dies by a crime committed against her: in The Corsair, Gulnare the Arab woman was under bad circumstances that led her to kill her master the wealthy cold-blooded Arab tyrant Syed; in The Giaour, Hassan, an Arab man, murders his beloved Arab woman Leila because she betrayed him to someone else; and in The Brid of Abydos, Giaffir [Jaafar] murders Zulieka because she pays attention to Selim once, because her death might bring about more pleasure to the wealthy Arab master than the pleasures of her sexual intercourse. In contradiction to this harem, aren't made to look like the right place for Muslim man to retire and seek rest (404); such an image smears the picture of the Arab man. Meanwhile, Zeenab was murdered in the harem's corner when she was no longer desired (248). This image brings to my mind Galland's sexism in the Arabian Nights as it represents an instigator to Morier; Galland himself learnt about the East from other earlier travelers. Jean Chardin writes He had met Chardin, whose writings on Persia were instrumental in the forging of the eighteenth century's views of that part of the world ... Chardin emphasized the severity prevalent in the seraglio, enumerated the restrictions against women, provided examples of the capricious punishments that they were summed up such strains. In one of these, Chardin recounts that king 'Abbas, much taken with the concubine is asked by her to refrain from sex because she is indisposed. Sus-picious of her excuse, he has the matter investigated, and finding her to be free from her 'incommodite de femme', he has her burnt alive (34).

Then came Morier's second experience; he learnt from Galland's experience. Out of these two situations came the story of the murder of Zeenab. But these stories of atrocities against women in the East are not uncommon in the Western scholarship. Kabbani relates the story of a Turkish Sultan who falls in love with a slave girl, so that he abandons all matters of state to lie in her embraces. Rebuked by his ministers and officers, who press him to attend to his army which is about to engage in battle, he is only emerged at their meddling. One evening, he bids his lover dress in her most revealing silks and attend to him in a banquet. He embraces her before his courtier, then abruptly draws his sword and cuts off her head. Another version has him bid his ministers into his bedchamber, where he lifts the bed-clothes to reveal to them the naked charms of his mistress. This done, he stabs her to death and marches off to war (35).

From these repelling anecdotes, one realizes how references to the East are imbued with deep fascination as they systematically keep portraying it in ugly images full of cruelty, ruthlessness, violence, and lasciviousness. In relation to such a context, Kabbani writes The violence of the East was often linked in Galland's entries with sexuality. This was a common trope of European travel writing: the all invasive seraglio with its crimes of passion was never far from the traveler's mind (36).

In another reference to the downtrodden Eastern woman in Hajji Baba Dr. Ahmak makes "a present of his Kurdish slave to his Majesty" (175) so as to remain in favor of his majesty the king. In short, the Eastern woman is made to be seen, by all means, as a dirt cheap "commodity". Moreover, one sees Hajji Baba himself in a mission where he receives orders to Buy women slaves for the Shah, to see them instructed in dancing, music, and embroidery, and to purchase spangled stiks [sic] and other luxuries for the royal harem (419).

Elsewhere in the English Romantic literature, and earlier to Morier's Hajji Baba, Coleridge's Osorio (1790) depicts Muslims as a people of low rank; they live to serve the Others. The lower class Muslims who make the happiness of Albert and Maria possible, while treated sympathetically, remain throughout on the margin of the text, entering the action only to further the aims and help construct the value of other -- i.e., white character (39).

Also, throughout Osorio, "Alhadra is associated with political conspiracy and violence" (40). Moreover, Coleridge depicts Arabs as "Moors", Moresc[s], "rebels", "vile[s]", and "fiends", and the Arab woman Alhadra is "crazy moorish maid", "a Moorish sorcerer", "an ungrateful woman" (41), whose crime was, she said "solely my complexion" (42).

From this variety of examples, it sounds clear that the negative images of the East in Morier's Hajji Baba do not come out of vacuum; Morier simply reconstructs ideas that have been prevalent in the European scholarship. In addition to reconstructing these images, Hajji Baba duplicates ideas and images of other Romantic writers particularly those of Byron, and like Byron's political poetry, Morier
Morier wants the innocent, and the faithful (if any) remain needy and in a bad situation while the Shah of Iran who
According to Morier, hypocrites and liars, in the East remain in good social position whereas the poor,
completely negative and stupid. He specifically ridicules the Muslim's social habit when they use
Arabian Nights. But Morier has badly distorted the meaning of the oath so as to make it look
prepared, you find yourselves caught as in a net; ruin and desolation surrounded when you think that
Instead of the sword and spear, theirs are treachery, deceit, falsehood; and when you are the least
By the death of Imam Hosein. Do they care for anyone of these things? No, they feel all the time that
swears by the Kebleh [Kaaba], by the king, and by his head; a third by your death, by the salt he eats,
your soul, and by his own head, by your child, by the Prophet, by his relations and ancestors; another
Every word by an oath? What is the use of oaths to men who speak the truth? One man swears by
In fact, Morier has deliberately misused the social concept of oath, and the nature of the Eastern
impostor, and sometimes a liar and a magician. On such Western mis-representations of Prophet
Muhammed, the East and Islam, Mohammed Sharafuddin writes
After the Crusades, no real communication took place between the two civilizations, no genuine
translation of major Islamic texts was encouraged. ... Misconceptions of Muhammad as an Antichrist
impostor and Muslims as pagans flourished during this period. These misconceptions were institutionalized in the West in terms of a superiority-inferiority policy, as the statements of such important figures as Napoleon, Balfour and Cromer indicate (43).

From these evidences, it has become obvious, in this context, that Morier learnt from the eighteenth
century English moral-ist Bernard Mandeville and reconstructed Mandeville's theory and works in a
Romantic form. Such a situation is described in the words of M. H. Abrams as "a conspicuous
Romantic tendency, after the rationalism and decorum of the Enlighten-ment"(44). Morier keeps
describing Muslims as cowards and liars by nature, as he writes
Instead of the sword and spear, theirs are treachery, deceit, falsehood; and when you are the least
prepared, you find yourselves caught as in a net; ruin and desolation surrounded when you think that
you are seated on a bed of roses. Lying is their great, their moral vice. Do you remark that they confirm
every word by an oath? What is the use of oaths to men who speak the truth? One man swears by
your soul, and by his own head, by your child, by the Prophet, by his relations and ancestors; another
swears by the Kebleh [Kaaba], by the king, and by his head; a third by your death, by the salt he eats,
by the death of Imam Hosein. Do they care for anyone of these things? No, they feel all the time that
they lie, and then comes an oath (140)

In fact, Morier has deliberately misused the social concept of oath, and the nature of the Eastern
culture when people intensify their speech. Sometimes, oaths are common among laymen and the
public. The concepts of oaths in the Arabic and Persian cultures are common in the tales of the
Arabian Nights. But Morier has badly distorted the meaning of the oath so as to make it look
completely negative and stupid. He specifically ridicules the Muslim's social habit when they use
religious terms and vocabularies in their speech such as Allah Akbar (God is Great), or La Ilah Illa
Allah (There is no God but Allah), or Bismillah (In the Name of Allah). Morier's scornful description of
some cultural habits and social customs of Muslims is meant to suggest that Islamic rituals are
primitive, uncivilized, and mischievous. These grim images are intended to distort the religion of the
East as a mis-guided inanity, and the Muslim culture as a purely negative one. Therefore, he intends to
undermine the power of Islam, a matter which suggests only one interpretation -- indulging in pure
Orientalism. These images are designed to defeat the glory of Muslim culture by showing it in purely
negative terms.

According to Morier, hypocrites and liars, in the East remain in good social position whereas the poor,
the innocent, and the faithful (if any) remain needy and in a bad situation while the Shah of Iran who
stands as a representative of the Muslim Umma, enjoys the luxuriant gardens of felicity. Morier wants
Morier's description of the luxuries of the East reflects a bona fide Western interest in wealth and markets of that region of the world; his interests in the Persian and Arabic trade and commerce is at the same time an interest in the geography and history of the area. Thus, it becomes conspicuous how and why Morier the diplomat connected various elements together in Hajji Baba. The novel bears a special interest analogous to those interests of Romantic writers like Beckford, Byron, Scott, Keats, and Moore. Morier indicates several themes in one paragraph: trade, slaves, social customs, and Islam, all of these inter-woven to mean only one thing -- the East. Morier has made Muslims to look gluttonous, greedy dreamers, and worshippers of their Prophet Mohammed by pilgrimaging to his tomb. This is, of course, a transgression of the Islamic faith and the culture of the East. It is noticeable that Muslims hate to be called otherwise, but Western scholars, and in this context James Morier in particular, prefer to call Muslims not by their name, but by coined names such as "Muhamedans" or "Mussulmans": The earlier is meant to convey the meaning of a false religion created by Mohammed who "made himself a prophet", and the latter term "Muhamedans" is a misspelled word meant to derogate its real meaning:

The term Muhammadan entails the assumption that Prophet Muhamed is an impostor, fraudulent, mountebank, deceiver, and charlatan, and that people are deceived by his 'theory' so that they worship him rather than worshipping God ... Such a picture of a despised Muslim -- in Western societies -- is not uncommon; it is again a renewed image of the middle ages (45).

Also, Morier portrays Arabs as thieves; Hajji Baba becomes a robber and invades his native city. This deed is meant to bring a clear evidence that Arabs are treacherous and untrustworthy (31-8). Then, Hajji Baba's father steals Arabian horse from some Turkish travelers (137-8). Earlier than Morier's Hajji Baba, Mary Shelley's Romantic novel Frankenstein portrayed an "unfortunate Muhammadan" from Turkey, and she made him look untrustworthy, unfaithful, and treacherous.(46) Morier's portrayed image renews the same old image portrayed by other writers.

Elsewhere in Hajji Baba, the Persians are made to look despotic in a whole chapter where Hajji Baba "gives a specimen of Persian despotism" (177-85). Both Arabs and Persians are Muslims but they are roughly divided into two major sets with subdivisions within these sets. For instance, Yazeeses [is] a small Shiite group a circumstance of itself sufficient to excite the hatred and execration of every good sector of Ali (139).

Throughout Hajji Baba, one reads more misconceptions of Islam and the Muslims. They are made to express their delight in raids and plunder; they are made to look war-like people who are accustomed to live on disputes, feuds, and all types of hatred and enmity. Hajji Baba is replete with "heroic" Muslim skirmishes, raids, and all the different colors of bluff. One example of Muslim "bluffing" can be seen in the story of the dervish who claims possession of supernatural knowledge that cures ill people; his talisman can work wonders and he saves the name and reputation of a famous doctor who was unable to cure a deadly-sick man. The dervish said Pen and ink were also given to me: then calling up all my gravity, I scrambled the paper over in a variety of odd characters, which here and there contained the names of Allah, Mohamed, Ali, Hassan, Hossein, and all the Imams placing them in different anagrams, and substituting here and there figures instead of letters. I then handed it over with great ceremony to the doctor, who calling for water and a basin, washed the whole from off the paper into the basin, whilst the bystanders offered up prayers for the efficacy of the precious writing. The doctor said, 'In the name of the prophet, let the patient take this; and if fate hath decreed that he is to live, then the sacred names which he will now swallow will restore him: but if not, neither my skill, nor that of any other man, can ever be of the least avail (67).

The water of the basin is supposed to cure ill people when they drink it. Morier's little story here is meant to present the culture of the East as one of deceit, fraud, bluff, and black magic; Islam is portrayed as superstitious and far from being realistic; it is all negative, unacceptable, and incompatible with the daily life of any man. These literary images reflect Morier's intention to distort the image of the East, even more.

The interest of the West went beyond literature, and literary genres seemed to be tools masterfully used by the Orientalists in carrying out their desired interests -- i.e., colonization of the East. Colonialist ideas were and are still a constituent part of European cultural history, an issue which is hard to ignore, jump over, or under-mine, or forget (47).

Moreover, Nigel Leask writes

Byron's account of orientalist literature as a commercial bauble [in Beppo] echoes his admired Pope's gibe at a hack who could 'turn a Persian tale for half-a-crown'(48) or Goldsmith's disdainful remark that 'Mr Tibs [is] a very useful hand; he writes receipts for the bite of a mad dog and throws off an eastern tale to perfection'(49). ... European orientalism, like European colonialism had moved from being a...
commercial venture controlled by literature and financial freebooters or monopolizing joint-stock companies to participate in the civilizing mission of nineteenth-century European culture, or the expansionist dependence on colonial markets. (50)

This accumulation of evidence of severe sarcasm and unjust portrayals of the Muslim Umma saved a reservoir of the Romantic material about the East for Morier to imitate, re-portray, and bring to life clichés and stereotypes in Hajji Baba. The overall picture of Hajji Baba may mean that Morier is a provocative Colonialist writer, and a clear and zealous Orientalist who supports Colonialist actions against the countries and people of the East.

In the end, it has become necessary to quote Edward Said as he writes in the history of nineteenth century attempts to restore, restructure, and redeem all the various provinces of knowledge and life, Orientalism -- like all the other Romantically inspired learned disciplines -- contributed an important share (51).

Finally, Morier's Hajji Baba is no different from la mode of the Romantic period as it introduces a double vision of the East. On the one hand, it is a nice place to live in, and there is a bad people living in, and on the other hand, it clearly reflects Colonialist and Imperialist thoughts that are mainly generated from earlier literature and emulate the Occ-ident's cultural heritage and history vis-à-vis the Orient.

Notes:


2. James Morier. "Introduction," to The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan. Edited with introduction and notes by C. W. Stewart. (1824, Rept; London: Oxford University Press, 1963), v. This is a reprint of the second edition which appeared in the same year as the first one. The difference between the second and the first editions is that the second contains notes.

3. The Levant Company was a British joint-stock company established at the time of queen Elizabethan to enhance commerce and expansion overseas. It was operated within a geographical sphere assigned by royal charter. Such a company was protected by the British government in two ways. First, no other company was authorized to trade in its domain, or areas of trade. Secondly, the Levant Company was kept in a range where the Royal Navy of Britain can provide protection. For more information about the Elizabethan trade companies, see G. M. Trevelyan, English Social History. 1942; Rept, London: Penguin Books. 1974.

4. All quotations are taken from James Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, Ed. with Intro and notes by C.W. Stewart, 1824; Rept, London: Oxford University Press, 1963, and page numbers are cited in the text.

5. See the "Editor's Introduction" to Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, xiii.


7. Mistakenly, some Western scholars use the term "the Middle East" for describing the Semitic East or the Muslim East. This usage, of course, reflects a lack of precision because in the nineteenth-century the Semitic or Muslim East was referred to as "the East", and the term "the Middle East" is relatively new one.

8. Of the widely read works related to the East in the Romantic era were works inherited from the eighteenth century. i.e. The Turkish Tales (1709); The Persian Tales (One Thousand and One Days) (1714); Travel and Adventures of the Three Princes of Serendeeb (1722); see, Martha Pike Conant, The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century. New York: Octagon Books, 1966.


10. Among the books of travel literature that appeared in the eighteenth century and could have exerted an influence on James Morier, I would like to mention The Travels of Lady Hester Stanlope by Hester Stanlope's physician (1823); R. Richardson Travels Along the Mediterranean (1823); W. R. Wilson Travels in Egypt and the Holy Land (1823).

11. English writings of the eighteenth century that came as a reflection to the translated Arabic and Persian literature, and, perhaps, read by James Morier, I would like to mention Robert Withers's A Description of the Grand Signor's Seraglio (1650); George Sandys's Sandys Travels (1658); John Covel, Early Voyages and Travels in Levant (1670); Jean Dumont's A New Voyage to the Levant (1690 and 1696); Antone Galland's The Arabian Nights' Entertainment (1704-1714); Aaron Hill's A Full and Just Account of the Present State of the Ottoman Empire (1709), Lady Mary Wortley Montague's Turkish Embassy Letters (1717-1718). William Collins's Persian Ecloues (1720): then published under...
Turkish Embassy Letters (1717-1718), William Collins's Persian Eclogues (1720; then published under the title Oriental Eclogues, 1724); Samuel Johnson's Mahomet and Irene (1749); The History of Rasselas, Prince of Abissinia (1759); Oliver Goldsmith's The Citizen of the World, 2 vols. (1762); William Beckford's Vathek, an Arabian Tale (1789); Jonathan Scott's The Arabian Nights (1811).


14. C.W. Stewart, "Introduction" to The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan. x.


23. See the "Introductory Epistle" to James Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, 3.


29. Ibid. ix.

30. See the "Introductory Epistle" by Peregrine Persic in Morier's The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan, 3.


33. Said, Orientalism. 190.


36. Ibid. 25.


40. Ibid. 503.

41. S. T. Coleridge, Osorio (London: J. D. Campbell, 1890), 207.

42. Ibid. 207.


47. Abdelwahed, Orientalism and Romanticism, 57-8.


51. Said, Orientalism, 197.
In Haji Baba, Morier shows a double vision. The question of his interest in the East does not stop at the border of fascination and entertainment. His fascination with the culture of the East is more than a love of something that is meant to be naturally beautiful and socially entertaining and enjoyable: it is an admiration of the atmosphere and life of the glamorous East in general; he sees the East as a land of bounteous gifts of Nature -- serene waters, unclouded sky, and gifted poets. Morier's misrepresentation of the culture of the East supports a purely political theory in service of a militarily staunch and economically solid European society. It is obvious that exaggerated characterization of what Morier introduces to the Western reader is an example of Romantic Orientalism. James Justinian Morier (15 August 1782 – 19 March 1849) was a British diplomat and author noted for his novels about the Qajar dynasty in Iran, most famously for the Haji Baba series. Morier was born in Ottoman Smyrna, the second son of Isaac Morier, a Swiss-born merchant, British by naturalisation, and a member of the London-based Levant Company, and Elizabeth Clara Van Lennep. After private education in England, he worked in his father's Smyrna business between 1799 and 1806.
JAMES MORIER The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan "Hajji Baba" stands by itself among the innumerable books written of the East by Europeans. For these inimitable concessions of a Persian rogue are intended to give a picture of Oriental life as seen by Oriental and not by Western eyes---to present the country and people of Persia from a strictly Persian standpoint. This daring attempt to look at the East from the inside, as it were, is acknowledged to be successful; all Europeans familiar with Persia testify to the truth, often very caustic truth, of James Morier's portraiture...Â So popular was the work that Morier wrote an amusing sequel to it entitled "Hajji Baba in England." He died on March 23, 1849. Buy the eBook.